

# Meeting of the ESF Faculty

February 3, 2005

Moon Conference Room

**Attending:** Tom Amidon, Marla Bennett, Greg Boyer, Isreal Cabasso, Craig Davis, Elizabeth Elkins, Jo Anne Ellis, Leah Flynn, Charlie Hall, Myrna Hall, John Hassett, Richard Hawks, Elaine Irvin, Paul McGuinness, Robert Meyer, Neil Murphy, Tsutomu Nakatsugawa, William Porter, Lindi Quackenbush, Dudley Raynal, Kevin Reynolds, Neil Ringler, Susan Sanford, Rudy Schuster, Sue Senecah, Scott Shannon, Rick Smardon, Larry Smart, Jeri Lynn Smith, Leonard Smith, William Smith, Ken Tiss, John Turbeville, John Waisel, Julie White, and Ruth Yanai  
Students: Frances Brzozowski, Sean Blakeney, Laura DiCarlo, Liz Reif, and Liz Tully

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 by Scott Shannon.

The Library provided a PowerPoint loop highlighting archival resources on the environment in New York State, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the NY...

**Minutes** of the December 9th meeting, 2004, were approved as posted.

## **Announcements and Report of the Executive Committee** (Scott Shannon)

Every year at this time we call for nominations for new officers for faculty governance for the coming year. We need candidates for Secretary, Chair of the Committee on Instruction, Chair of the Committee on Research, SUNY Senator, SU senator, and (Scott fill in). Our goal is to have even more than one candidate on each line of our ballot. Please volunteer, nominate a colleague, or communicate with your faculty chair. New faculty members will find that serving the college in this way provides excellent opportunities to learn how things work at ESF or in the larger systems in which we take part.

Marla Bennett: Sussman proposals are due on Tuesday, February 15th. Your students will be asking you for supporting letters.

## **President's Report** (Neil Murphy)

1. Robin Kimmerer's book, *Gathering Moss*, won the 2005 John Burrough's Medal for outstanding natural history writing. This articulate and graceful book uses the science of moss to teach us what life is all about. Thank Robin for it when you see her.
2. We have been approved by SUNY to give an honorary degree to Senator Gaylord Nelson, the father of Earth Day. He served in the US Senate from 1962-1981, a formative time in the formation of environmental policy. His legislative initiatives led to the preservation of the Appalachian Trail, fuel efficiency standards in automobiles, the

banning of DDT and Agent Orange, the National Environmental Education Act, and the Upper Grate Lakes Regional Commission. He has been recognized by the United Nations and by the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Thank Sue Senecah for putting together our nomination package. We can't remember when the last honorary ESF degree was awarded. We hope to make this a regular occurrence.

3. At this time of year, state agencies submit proposed budgets. Usually there are constraints on increases in the proposals, but this year there were not. The Governor's proposed budget is up from \$100B to \$105B, with a \$84.3M increase for SUNY. The proposed tuition increase is \$500/year (we proposed what?) The Governor never includes EOP funds, and the legislature always restores it. There is a proposed Tuition Guarantee Program, which would make tuition constant for four years for each entering class. The Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) would be used to set the cost of tuition for each class. There is \$21M for an Academic Scholar Matching Incentive, which would match philanthropic gifts for scholarships. Because the cost of delivering education at the Doctoral Campuses is high, there is a new proposal for a Doctoral Campus Tuition Differential.

SUNY is planning to lobby the legislature, particularly for the SUNY Tuition Guarantee. Our web site would contribute to a effort to generate 30,000 faxes system-wide. Campus Presidents will be involved in a lobbying program, meeting with legislators, including SUNY alums, meeting with students and advocating locally.

This will probably be one of the latest budgets that we will ever have seen.

4. The Governor's State-of-the-State Address included "Today, at Syracuse's School of Environmental Science and Forestry, they're working to produce ethanol from renewable sources like wood fiber." The idea was that this publicity will help us with the Biorefinery Initiative. Thank Tom Amidon and his colleagues for their work. We think we are the only SUNY campus to have been mentioned and possibly the only one to have been mentioned two years in a row.

5. Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions: This is an unusual year in that applications are up 25% from last year (earlier they were up by 50%); the SUNY system is up by 5%. Applications are up across all the programs. Acceptances and deposits are also up. Our schedules for accepted student activities have moved up to correspond with the pattern of earlier applications. The campus Open House will still be Saturday 4/30.

Graduate student recruitment is a little slow, but more applications are coming in. Please pay attention to keeping folders circulating.

Discussion

Greg Boyer: If the court rules that the legislature will no longer be able to add things but only subtract things from the governor's budget, will that be bad news for us?

Murphy: In the end, it comes down to negotiations between a very few parties.

Charlie Hall: Will we be teaching more students without more resources?

Murphy: No, our target is to increase by only 10 students, and we hope to take them in underutilized areas.

Susan Sanford: The first students to apply are the best students; so far, we are more selective than last year, even though the numbers are up.

Rich Hawks: It's hard to know where the numbers are going to settle out, because the rate of processing applications has changed so much.

Susan: We are about 6 weeks ahead of the old schedule. On-line data processing is faster and more accurate.

## **Reports of the Standing Committees**

### **Committee on Instruction (Craig Davis)**

There will be presentations on February 8, 2005 from ProQuest about electronic "ETD" theses. Please attend (add times).

You all got an e-mail yesterday announcing a survey about "Impediments to Instructional Quality." The survey is on line; you have access until 5 p.m. on February 28. You need the password from your e-mail to get into the survey. You will be entered into a drawing for a maple syrup prize. We will discuss the results in our April faculty meeting.

#### Curriculum Proposals:

1. Revisions to Urban Environmental Minor: the questions raised have been addressed and the committee recommends approval. Approved.
2. Revisions to Minor in Management Studies. This revision is related to dropping some required courses (see below). No comments were received. Approved.
3. Revision to BS in Natural History and Interpretation. This is a minor change in course requirements to a proposal we approved last year. Approved.

#### New or Revised Courses:

1. EFB 404 Natural History Museums and Modern Science: this course is incorporated in the revision to the Natural History and Interpretation curriculum. Question (from a student): Who would teach that course? Answer: Andy Saunders and Alex Weir. Approved.

#### Drop Courses:

These courses have not been taught in 3-6 years or are associated with changes in curricula approved above. Approved.

EFB 304 Natural History Museum Techniques

EFB 532 Plant Anatomy

EST 225 Introduction to Legal Processes

FOR 401 Tools for Urban Problem Solving

LSA 351 Seminar: Land Use Planning

LSA 402 Urban Problem Solving Think Tank

LSA 445 Construction Documentation Studio  
LSA 453 Community Land Planning Workshop

**Committee on Research** (Scott Shannon for Chris Nowak)

McIntire Stennis: Reviews were due to the committee on January 31st, recommendations will be delivered to the Dean of Research on March 1st.

The Spotlight on Student Research and Outreach is tentatively scheduled for April 12; contact Chris Nowak if you are aware of a problem with this date. Spread the word to your students to begin preparing posters.

**Committee on Outreach and Public Service** (no report)

**SU Senator** (Sue Senecah)

It has been a quiet month at Syracuse University.

**SUNY Senate** (Scott Shannon)

Neither Tom nor I could make the last meeting; discussion centered around the Chancellor and the Trustees (Gen Ed outcomes). ESF will host the next Senate meeting April 7-9, in Nifkin Lounge. Consider dropping by the general session meetings or committee meetings to learn how our system works.

**Undergraduate Student Association** (Liz Reif)

The USA has students interested in serving on the various college committees. Chairs should be hearing from them soon. I am working with Dr. Heffernan on a statement of campus values for the ESF Board of Trustees. There is a TG on Feb 25 and Morning Munch on Feb 8. On Feb 28 there is a presentation by Rainforest Relief called "Rainforest in your Shopping Cart."

Liz Tully: There is an organic lunch alternative on Tuesdays and Thursday 11:30 to 1:30, made by Syracuse Real Food Cooperative; visit the cart outside the Snack Shop. Composting will be available in Nifkin Lounge starting February 14th, to be used to produce vegetables in the old greenhouse gardens. The goal is to produce our own organic vegetables. Read the Knothole to learn more.

**Discussion Item: "*Campus Governance -vs- Faculty Governance*"**

Scott Shannon: At our meetings, only faculty members have voting status. Our meetings differ in a couple of respects from most other SUNY institutions. At larger campuses, there is not a faculty meeting of the whole; they use a representative style of governance. Also at most SUNY institutions, staff are represented, not just faculty. During the years I've been involved as faculty chair or SUNY senator, there has been discussion of whether we could have broader participation in campus governance at ESF. Are there advantages to making a change, and can the disadvantages be compensated for?

Neil Ringler: Course decisions are a faculty matter, but most of the issues we discuss are of interest to a larger body.

Scott Shannon: This is the most common objection to broadening our governance, but surely we could find a way to have faculty vote on curriculum issues while opening up other issues to the campus.

John Hassett: All we vote on is curriculum; what else should we be governing?

Scott Shannon: For example, if we were more inclusive, we might justifiably play a role in the budgeting process, which is within our bylaws.

Neil Murphy: I use the Executive Committee as a budget committee; that's the current form of faculty input. If and when we have an expanding budget, it will be more valuable to entertain new ideas for how to spend money.

Scott Shannon: There are other committees that don't now fit into our governance structure, such as the Campus Safety Committee and the Quality of Work Life Committee.

Paul McGuinness: Do other campuses provide a model that we could follow?

Israel Cabasso: At some campuses, the president is not allowed to attend faculty meetings. We could try a more narrow definition for some meetings and broaden it for others.

Julie White: There are other committees that could be reporting here: The Retention Committee, the Recruitment Committee, and the Research Committee (what's that?). We in Student Life would benefit from more faculty input, and we could do better at communicating to faculty about our issues.

Ruth Yanai: It seems like we could broaden the scope of our meetings to include contributions from these committees without having to change our bylaws, which state that the faculty vote on curriculum matters.

Betsy Elkins: Faculty meetings used to be closed; we opened it up at lot 10 or 15 years ago when we decided to invite the staff to attend.

Scott Shannon: We don't vote much, unlike SUNY Senate, partly because we don't have adversarial relationships in which we need to take a stand. It's like having a referendum. If we expanded to campus governance, we might feel that we could take on more general issues (earlier Charlie Hall suggested we should vote on parking tickets during dome events).

Charlie Hall: When I was an assistant professor, there was one secretary to every four professors; now I have letters of recommendation sitting on my desk that I have to take

care of, and they involve filling out forms on web sites. It's not surprising that there aren't more professors here; we don't have time to come to these meetings. Do other professors feel that everyone is dumping their load on us? (general clamor) We just want to be left alone to do our jobs.

Paul McGuinness: We could bring in a time-management trainer and learn some new skills.

Charlie Hall: I'm paying my assistant out of my own pocket. We're paying a TA out of our grants.

Bill Porter: This is a small campus and we get a lot of value in the small college feeling and family community. Getting everyone involved in something like this would be a marvelous way to integrate more carefully across the college. The interactions we have as faculty are awfully limited. We don't realize who all is working on these issues unless we get involved. It would be valuable to have more of that conversation here.

Sue Senecah: I agree that we would benefit from broadening our participation, and I support making it more formal than just inviting more people to attend without giving them voting status. So we need to identify which issues are voted on by faculty only.

Neil Murphy: I agree that we want to have a broader dialog. The governance piece would need to be worked out.

Betsy Elkins: I think it's time to open it up. I didn't mean to say that it was a good thing that it used to be even more closed.

Kevin Reynolds: It will build community to have more people here, we need to learn about each other.

Rick Smardon: We have excluded people in the past and lost their participation. We need all the help we can get (remember the recommendation letters on our desks).

Dudley Raynal: Can we simply expand the membership or do we need to change the structure of governance?

Charlie Hall: We could alternate meetings between campus-wide and faculty only.

Ruth Yanai: If course proposals are what have to be addressed in the faculty-only meetings, we can't afford to deal with them only every other month.

Craig Davis: We used to act on all the course proposals in a marathon session at the end of each semester.

Scott Shannon: Let's propose to investigate alternatives, look at other models, and then report back at the last faculty meeting of the year.

Ruth Yanai: May I make a friendly amendment? Can we ask for volunteers to staff this effort, instead of leaving it to the Executive Committee?

Elaine Irvin, Julie White, Richard Smardon, Kevin Reynolds, and Jeri Lynn Smith offered to serve on this committee. Please contact them if you can contribute.

Charlie Hall: I want to compliment the people in this room. Unlike many other places, we are not trying to concentrate power in the hands of a few.

**New business:** None

**Old business:** None

### **More Announcements**

Betsy Elkins described the slide show with samples from the NYS Environmental History Virtual Reference Collection, a project of the New York State Archives. The ESF College Archives is a partner in this project and many of the slides are from our collection.

Dudley Raynal: The provost search continues.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by

Ruth Yanai